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## INFILTRATION AND LOGISTICS—SOUTH VIETNAM

### USIB MEMORANDUM

Submitted by the  
DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

Concurred in by the  
UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD  
as Indicated overleaf  
28 October 1965

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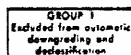
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*Submitted by the*  
**DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE**

*The following intelligence organizations participated in the preparation of this memorandum: The Central Intelligence Agency and the intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Defense, and NSA.*

*Concurred in by the*  
**UNITED STATES INTELLIGENCE BOARD**

*on 28 October 1965. Concurring were the Director of Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; and the Director of the National Security Agency. The Atomic Energy Commission Representative to the USIB and the Assistant to the Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation, abstained, the subject being outside of their jurisdiction.*



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INFILTRATION AND LOGISTICS -- SOUTH VIETNAM

THE PROBLEM

The object of this study is to assess the nature and amount of the support being provided to the Communist military forces and the population under Communist control in South Vietnam, including the manner in which supplies and personnel are provided both from inside and from outside South Vietnam by land and by water.

CONCLUSIONS

A. The largest quantities of manpower and supplies for the Viet Cong are obtained within South Vietnam. The Viet Cong have developed an effective logistic system which procures from internal sources almost all the supplies used by the Viet Cong. Important military materiel unavailable locally is obtained from external sources.

B. The People's Revolutionary Party of South Vietnam is responsible for providing funds for the Viet Cong war effort. Taxation, economic activities, seizure, and clandestine operations appear to be the principal means of obtaining financial and material support for the Viet Cong. Funds acquired internally are supplemented by those obtained from Communist countries.

C. Within South Vietnam the Viet Cong transportation system and network of supply bases are indispensable to the operations of their forces at anything approaching the present level of military activity. The volume of supplies moving internally and the total stockpile in the supply bases cannot be determined from present evidence. Internal distribution of infiltrated supplies and transportation of locally procured goods require about 14,000 personnel, exclusive of enforced labor, on a full-time basis. Supply depots normally have a nominal capacity of from 5 to 10 tons of supplies and while usually containing mixed classes of supplies, some contain only weapons and ammunition, and some handle food exclusively. The fragmentation of storage areas is a basic constraint on the rapid initiation of large-scale Viet Cong actions.

D. The Viet Cong are increasingly dependent on outside sources for arms and ammunition, certain technical equipment, medical supplies, cadre personnel, and trained technicians. These move into South Vietnam via three principal routes, as follows:

1. The Laotian corridor, which is continuously being improved, is the principal route for the movement of personnel and supplies from North Vietnam to South Vietnam. Supplies moved over this route are

destined primarily for the northern and central highland areas. The Communists have developed the logistical troops and organization to control and operate this route. As of mid-1964, an estimated 1,700 to 2,000 men were maintaining the transportation corridor through Laos and another 3,000 or more were maintaining the route in the northern part of South Vietnam.

2. The sea route from North Vietnam is probably being used less at this time, although it played an important part in stocking the supply bases in the southern and coastal parts of the country. The use of alternative routes for maintaining stocks of military materiel in these areas has not been detected.

3. Some supplies for the Viet Cong have entered South Vietnam from Cambodia. Most of the supplies are either indigenous to Cambodia or arrived through normal trade channels, but some have probably moved in clandestine channels. Cambodia is also used by the Viet Cong as a sanctuary and for temporary military facilities. The Viet Cong use of Cambodian territory is due to active Cambodian cooperation in some areas, a laissez-faire attitude in others, and the inability or failure of the Cambodian government to control or even patrol its frontiers. The Cambodian government has taken an attitude increasingly favorable to the Communists in the Vietnamese situation, but has stopped short of military support.

E. From 1959 through September 1965, about 48,000 personnel are believed to have infiltrated from North Vietnam to South Vietnam, including units of regular PAVN forces. Although it is impossible to compute the total amount of supplies available for infiltration through Laos into South Vietnam, it appears that the daily average thus far during 1965 has been at least 5 tons and may have been more than 8 tons. These amounts, primarily delivered by truck into Laos in the past dry season, may have been supplemented by additional supplies moved by porters and other means of transport. The additional amounts cannot be quantified. We have also been unable to determine comparable figures for the sea route from North Vietnam and the land and water routes from Cambodia. However, what evidence there is leads to the conclusion that the tonnages moving over these latter routes are significantly less than the tonnage moving through Laos.

## DISCUSSION

### I. GENERAL

1. The rugged terrain of South Vietnam offers an excellent environment for the infiltration of supplies from adjoining areas and for clandestine movement within the country. South Vietnam is composed of the Mekong Delta, a coastal lowland, and a highland region. (See the map at Annex.) The delta area is interlaced with about 2,500 miles <sup>1/</sup> of navigable canals, rivers, and streams, and more than half of the area is flooded each summer and autumn. The principal streams are 800 to 1,100 feet wide in their upper courses and 2,500 feet to over 1 mile wide in their lower courses. The land adjacent to the streams consists of large areas of marsh and paddy land. Mangrove swamps also line the lower reaches of some rivers.

2. The coastal lowland extending northward from the delta plain varies in width from 5 to 30 miles. In some places, spurs of the highlands encroach on the lowlands and serve as potential avenues of ingress to the interior uplands. Where the highlands extend to the sea, many sheltered landing areas are found between the promontories and the steep rocky islands offshore. Between the coastal lowlands and the Mekong Valley lies the highland region, which extends from just northeast of the Mekong Delta northward into North Vietnam. North of about the 14th Parallel the highlands consist mainly of steep mountain ridges with intervening deep, narrow valleys. The southern part of the highlands, however, is a complex of mountain ranges and scattered plateaus. The mountains, some with peaks above 8,000 feet, and the deeply incised parts of the plateaus make surface transportation difficult.

3. The land boundaries of South Vietnam extend more than 900 miles, all of which adjoin Communist-controlled or unfriendly territory. On the east and south, for a distance of about 1,500 miles, the country fronts on the South China Sea and the Gulf of Siam. The boundary with Cambodia extends about 600 miles northeastward from the Gulf of Siam, about 460 miles of which is in the delta area and is crossed by numerous rivers and streams that can be used as infiltration routes. The remainder of the boundary with Cambodia crosses forested plains and the hilly-to-mountainous western edge of the Annam Mountains. Established vehicular roads cross the Cambodian border in the delta area and in the forested plains north of Saigon, but the Viet Cong can also use trails to cross the border in numerous places. The entire border with Cambodia is an area of tension because of frequent clashes between the forces of both countries. The boundary with Laos continues generally northward for about 300 miles along the crest of the Annam Mountains.

<sup>1/</sup> Mileages are given in statute miles and tonnages in short tons throughout this report.



Passage across this boundary is generally tortuous; the best trail crossings and the ones apparently used most by the Viet Cong are in the northernmost part, where the border is hilly rather than mountainous. The demarcation line between North and South Vietnam, about 50 miles long, descends the eastern slope of the Annam Mountains and crosses hills and a narrow coastal plain to the South China Sea. The Demilitarized Zone extends 5 kilometers (about 3 miles) on each side of the demarcation line. An inoperable railroad and a road cross this line, but normal traffic on these routes has been stopped by military outposts on both sides of the border.

4. Within South Vietnam the terrain for the most part enables the Viet Cong to move supplies about quite freely using primitive transport. Most of the population of South Vietnam lives in villages, principally in the Mekong Delta. The few large towns are mainly in the delta and along the coast. Settlements in the delta are built along the banks of rivers and canals. Numerous small inland water craft provide the major share of transport in this area both for the local populace and for the Viet Cong. In the highlands, villages are located in scattered clearings on high ground. A sparse network of mostly one-lane to two-lane bituminous-treated roads links the large settlements and towns. The majority of the settlements, however, are connected by tracks or, at best, by one-lane earth roads or roads that have crushed-stone surfaces. Many villages are linked only by trails. In such terrain the Viet Cong can use porters, bicycles, carts, and occasionally modern vehicles. Poor modern transportation, plus the fact that the Viet Cong can mingle with the local traffic, makes government interception of Viet Cong traffic very difficult.

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## II. SOURCES OF SUPPLIES AND FUNDS FOR THE COMMUNIST MILITARY FORCES AND THE POPULATION UNDER COMMUNIST CONTROL IN SOUTH VIETNAM

### Internal Organization

5. The People's Revolutionary Party of South Vietnam -- the southern branch of the Communist Party in North Vietnam -- is responsible for the complex task of providing funds for the Viet Cong war effort and of providing most of the essential, nonmilitary goods for the Viet Cong organization. Operating through a vertical series of Party committees which exist on almost all geographical levels from village to the Central Office, South Vietnam (COSVN), the Party has attempted to develop internal sources of funds and supplies for the war effort. A wide array of front, Party, and military elements -- under the overall direction of the Party -- implement the principal tasks of production, acquisition, and transportation of supplies. The Finance and Economic Section of the Party, the Rear Services of the Viet Cong military organization, and the various units of the National Front for the Liberation of South Vietnam (NFLSV) are the principal instrumentalities in these tasks. The Finance and Economic Section of the Party is the basic economic organization of the Viet Cong and the source of almost all supplies provided internally and some of those provided externally. At the province level and above, each Finance and Economic Section is headed by a policy level Party cadre and includes the chief of the Rear Services of the Viet Cong main force units. It is the responsibility of the various finance and economic units to supervise the economy of Viet Cong-controlled areas, to acquire the money and goods required by the Viet Cong, and to implement economic programs designed to strengthen Viet Cong economic power and disrupt the economy of South Vietnam.

6. As a principal unit in the internal Viet Cong logistics network, the Finance and Economic Section works closely with the Rear Services of the Viet Cong military units and with the various NFLSV organizations. This relationship with the Rear Services provides the Finance and Economic Section with a channel for supplying military units with required goods and for calling upon the military for assistance in meeting economic tasks. A similar relationship exists with the NFLSV organizations. The Finance and Economic Section relies on these organizations to supply civilian manpower for the economic tasks of the Party, and, in turn, attempts to meet the requirements of the civilian population by supplying the necessary goods.

### Internal Sources

7. The Viet Cong appear to be largely self-sufficient in regard to almost all nonmilitary supplies. Nonmilitary supplies available to the Viet Cong in South Vietnam are indigenous or imported through legal

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or illegal trade channels. The Viet Cong have developed a complex system of economic operations devoted to acquiring financial and material resources in South Vietnam for their military effort. Taxation, self-initiated economic activities, seizure, and clandestine operations appear to be the principal means of obtaining financial and material support for the Viet Cong.

8. In terms of actual receipts, taxation is probably the most important source of financial and material support for the Viet Cong. The US Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) has estimated that the Viet Cong collect 50 to 100 million piasters per province annually, or about US \$30 million to \$60 million per year in all of South Vietnam. <sup>2/</sup> There is insufficient evidence to estimate actual tax collections in cash and in kind, but it is known that the Viet Cong impose agricultural, plantation, transportation, and business taxes on a wide scale throughout the country. Although tax payments are probably the major source of local currency, bond drives, monetary issues, and clandestine fund drives also represent significant sources of local currency. It is possible that known Chinese Communist purchases of piaster banknotes in Hong Kong are turned over to the Viet Cong. These purchases have been about 30 million to 40 million piasters (\$250,000 to \$350,000 depending on the prevailing Hong Kong exchange rate) per month. In September 1965, however, Chinese Communist purchases totaled 280 million piasters, or about \$2.3 million. It is also possible that the Chinese Communists have been purchasing piasters for delivery in Saigon by means of so-called telegraphic transfers. There is no specific evidence of a Viet Cong shortage of local currency, and in fact there have been unconfirmed reports that the Viet Cong are building a fund surplus to meet the costs of administering additional areas that may come under their control.

9. Agricultural taxation is probably the most important source of Viet Cong tax receipts. During the past crop year the Viet Cong employed progressive tax schedules on agricultural income with as many as 25 separate rates in the Mekong Delta region alone. If these rates had been applied only to rice production in Viet Cong-controlled areas of the delta, the collection of rice would have amounted to nearly 100,000 tons, an amount far in excess of Viet Cong requirements

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<sup>2/</sup> This range is intended to be a rough approximation of internally acquired Viet Cong resources. In comparison, central government revenues in 1964 totaled about \$175 million, mainly from indirect taxes and customs duties collected in the Saigon metropolitan area. South Vietnamese piasters were converted to US dollars at the rate of exchange of 73.5 piasters to US \$1.

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in the delta or even on a national basis. <sup>3/</sup> Because equivalent Viet Cong tax rates are applied to other agricultural production in the delta, it is estimated that the Viet Cong collect far in excess of their nationwide requirements for food in the delta alone. In the central part of the country agricultural tax collections cannot be calculated because the tax has not been applied as systematically or as comprehensively as in the Mekong Delta area. However, there is little doubt that even in this area the agricultural tax supplies a significant portion of Viet Cong needs for rice, salt, manioc, fish, and other foodstuffs. In addition, in this area the Viet Cong often purchase or confiscate rice and salt.

10. Plantation taxes -- either in money or in kind -- also account for a significant portion of Viet Cong tax receipts. Rubber plantations close to War Zones C and D (see map at Annex) provide an important means of supply for Viet Cong forces in these areas; these plantations possess large stocks of rice, medicine, POL, and other supplies and have long been vulnerable to Viet Cong economic pressure. According to a recent captured document, the annual plantation tax is approximately 1,000 piasters (\$13.70) per hectare (2.47 acres), or a total of about \$1 million for the potentially exploitable area of 75,000 hectares if subject to Viet Cong taxation. Wage taxes on plantation workers and Viet Cong demands for labor service for transportation are also known to exist on a wide scale. Most of the internal transportation of the country, both personal and commercial, is also taxed by the Viet Cong, although it is impossible to estimate total receipts in cash and kind from this source. Taxes are also imposed on business establishments and commercial activities whenever possible. Small rice and sugar mills are taxed in areas outside of the control of the government of South Vietnam; woodcutters, charcoal kilns, and sawmills are generally easy prey for the Viet Cong. Import and export taxes are levied against trade between areas controlled by the Viet Cong and areas controlled by the central government in order to provide revenue and to promote a favorable trading pattern for the Viet Cong. Thus the import of medicines, cloth, POL, and printing supplies into areas controlled by the Viet Cong is not taxed at all, but the export of metal from Viet Cong areas is forbidden completely.

11. Despite the considerable financial and material resources available to the Viet Cong through tax collection and other financial

<sup>3/</sup> During January through August, rice deliveries to Saigon from the delta totaled about 650,000 tons in 1963, 440,000 tons in 1964, and 340,000 tons in 1965. It is possible that Viet Cong tax collections account for most of this so-called shortfall of deliveries to Saigon. There have been persistent reports that the Viet Cong are smuggling rice into Cambodia to acquire foreign exchange or otherwise generate funds for their effort. However, the amount of rice actually disposed of through Cambodia is not known.

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operations such as bond drives, monetary issues, and the use of credit cooperatives, additional economic activities have been initiated to support Viet Cong military personnel and the civilian population under Viet Cong control. For example, major efforts to produce their own foodstuffs, especially rice and manioc, have been made by the Viet Cong in the central highlands. Units to produce clothing have been established as subordinate elements of the Rear Services of the Viet Cong military organization. Simple manufacturing units, which produce farm implements for the civilian population, also produce military goods such as mines and grenades. Where materials are not ordinarily available through other means, they are often seized outright, although it is sometimes difficult to distinguish between seizure through force and enforced tax collections. However, the Viet Cong do accumulate significant supplies as war booty, including medicines, communications equipment, foodstuffs, and military equipment.

12. Clandestine front business operations in areas controlled by the government of South Vietnam and involvement of legitimate enterprises in Viet Cong procurement operations are considered to be common in many provinces. These operations procure essential supplies for the Viet Cong from areas controlled by the central government. Although these clandestine operations are used for the acquisition of indigenous goods, they are probably concerned primarily with the acquisition of manufactured goods that are imported into South Vietnam through Saigon and coastal ports. Private firms and individuals import and distribute key items such as POL, medicines, textiles, printing supplies, batteries, cement, and steel products. At the lowest level, the Viet Cong use the civilian population under their control to make discreet purchases of these goods. In district and provincial capitals, it is widely suspected that the Viet Cong operate clandestine front businesses or use legitimate enterprises as witting or unwitting agencies for procurement. For example, a French rubber plantation recently purchased a substantial quantity of medical supplies in Saigon and allowed a prearranged Viet Cong raid on the plantation to accomplish transfer of these goods.

#### External Sources

13. The external sources of supplies provided to the Viet Cong are principally Communist China, the USSR, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and France. The countries through which most of these supplies pass immediately before infiltration into South Vietnam are North Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, although direct shipments to the South Vietnam coast from other countries are possible. US-produced munitions and supplies have also reached the Viet Cong through capture or purchase in South Vietnam.

14. Military supplies that are moved via North Vietnam usually are transported by rail through Kwangsi Province, China, into North Vietnam.

Until early 1965 the International Control Commission (ICC) observers were permitted to read the manifests but were not permitted to inspect the contents of the freight cars that moved into North Vietnam from China through Dong Dang. After the bombing of North Vietnam began and the ICC observers were pulled back to Hanoi in early 1965, a foreign observer reported that two military trains per day obviously loaded with many kinds of war materiel moved into North Vietnam. Although this materiel undoubtedly was destined for the forces of the Peoples Army of Vietnam (PAVN), supplies for the Viet Cong apparently are taken from PAVN storage areas. Reports are also available indicating that military supplies have been moved from China by junk or small coastal ships to various points along the North Vietnamese coast. Although it is possible that munitions are moved into Haiphong by merchant ship, no such shipments have been identified. Information on the cargo carried by the 425 foreign merchant ships that called at Haiphong during 1964 is not complete. However, about 175 of the ships were owned by Bloc countries, and a considerable number of the Free World ships calling there were chartered to Bloc countries. Foreign seamen have reported that some merchant ships have unloaded cargo into junks and other small craft before entering the port of Haiphong. Such cargo could have been destined for sea infiltration into South Vietnam, much of which seems to originate in the Haiphong area.

15. For the most part, supplies for the Viet Cong that move from Cambodia arrive in Cambodia through normal commercial channels, principally aboard Free World ships. Very few ships from Communist countries call at Cambodian ports. The total tonnage is relatively small and the bulk of it consists of commercial supplies. No more than 10,000 tons of cargo were delivered by Bloc ships to Sihanoukville from the USSR and Eastern Europe in the first half of 1965. During the same period a single Chinese Communist ship made three calls. One of these deliveries included commercial goods only, another commercial goods and material for a small ordnance plant which China had promised to build for Cambodia, and the third a significant amount of military equipment -- in partial fulfillment of China's promise to equip about 27,000 Cambodian troops. Since 1963 there have been 10 reported Communist military deliveries to Cambodia. The items delivered have ranged from spare parts and ammunition to MIG aircraft, but there appears to have been no effort by Cambodia, Communist China, or the USSR to conceal these deliveries, and Prince Sihanouk has announced some details of the types of weapons supplied. Although it is impossible to trace the disposition of each rifle or machinegun delivered to Cambodia, this equipment is used to rearm Cambodian units, and the units are required to account accurately for the weapons and ammunition involved. It seems unlikely that any significant amount of this equipment or ammunition has been supplied to the Viet Cong, although some of the replaced equipment may have been turned over to them.

Critical Items of Supply

16. As mentioned above, the Viet Cong depend on the countryside and on the rural population for most of their food. Viet Cong taxation policy permits payments in rice, manioc, fish, salt, and other food items. Where food is not plentiful, particularly in the mountainous areas, Viet Cong food production units engage directly in farming. According to recently captured documents, prior to June 1963 the Viet Cong military units and administrative agencies were directed by COSVN to provide their own subsistence for a period of 4 months per year, with the remaining 8 months of subsistence furnished by COSVN. From June 1963 to June 1964, all units were required to furnish 100 percent of their own subsistence. Since June 1964, combat units have provided 50 percent of their own food and all other units 100 percent. Some reports have indicated that PAVN battalions operating in the northern part of South Vietnam receive some of their rice supplies from external sources.

17. The Viet Cong requirements for clothing and other textile products, such as hammocks and mosquito nets, are not extensive. Because of the mild climate, clothing is not a major problem. A number of items of clothing used by the Viet Cong, such as khaki uniforms, underwear, winter clothing for the mountain regions, and hammocks, are produced in North Vietnam. For the most part, these items have been issued to infiltrators who generally carry an individual supply of two uniforms, a knapsack, a hammock, and a mosquito net when entering the country. Clothing production units also exist as elements of the Rear Services of the Viet Cong military organization. In addition the Viet Cong obtain cloth internally by discreet purchase and externally from Cambodian sources.

18. The Viet Cong medical system is reasonably effective for the present level of fighting. Aid stations, hospitals, and rest centers are located within South Vietnam and probably have been located temporarily in Cambodia and Laos from time to time. Approximately 48 of these medical facilities have been identified, some of which are reported to be well-staffed and supplied even with such sophisticated equipment as x-ray machines, laboratory facilities, and dental chairs. One major source of medical supplies is the open market in South Vietnam. With the exception of opiates and barbiturates, most drugs can be purchased without difficulty in pharmacies in the larger cities. Another major source consists of captured South Vietnamese medical supplies. Some Viet Cong military operations have been specifically directed toward obtaining these supplies from hamlets and supply convoys. Finally, medical supplies are procured from various Communist and Free World countries through Cambodia and North Vietnam.

19. North Vietnam in particular appears to be engaged in building up its supplies of pharmaceuticals. North Vietnamese imports of

penicillin and blood plasma -- which are widely used in treating battle casualties -- have risen sharply in 1965. Although Communist countries have been the predominant suppliers of most pharmaceuticals, Japan has provided virtually all the blood plasma imported by North Vietnam. The actual quantity of pharmaceuticals being shipped from North Vietnam to the Viet Cong is not known. In addition to equipping the PAVN forces now fighting in South Vietnam, the North Vietnamese reportedly have used infiltrators to carry small packets of medical supplies containing such items as penicillin, sulfa drugs, and quinine derivatives to the Viet Cong. Because of the relative ease of transporting pharmaceuticals, it would be possible for North Vietnam to deliver substantial quantities of medical supplies by small coastal vessels and over the land infiltration routes. Once in South Vietnam these supplies presumably would be stored in central areas near base hospitals.

20. Viet Cong requirements for POL products probably are quite small. They have some organic vehicles and self-propelled craft, however, and also power generators and other power-driven equipment for which they need fuel. Taxation of the contents of petroleum tank trucks, outright seizure of petroleum supplies, and discreet purchase from local gasoline stations throughout the country are known methods of acquisition from internal sources.

21. The requirements of the Viet Cong for construction materials are unknown. Simple construction in base areas probably can be accomplished by the use of locally available materials, mainly timber. Although the Viet Cong have been known to seize convoys carrying supplies of cement, their access to other internal and external sources of construction materials is not known.

22. The Viet Cong supply of weapons, explosives, and ammunition has been accumulated from various sources: supplies buried or left behind by retreating government forces in South Vietnam; supplies infiltrated by land and sea; captured supplies; and locally produced supplies. The available quantities are unknown, but it is evident that substantial quantities of Soviet and Eastern European weapons and Chinese Communist copies of these weapons have been infiltrated into South Vietnam for use by the Viet Cong. This flow of weapons from outside South Vietnam has enabled the Viet Cong to achieve some progress in weapons standardization within main force units. Older weapons are being passed on to guerrilla units. The present emphasis in local manufacture seems to be on the reloading of ammunition and the fabrication of mines, grenades, and other explosive devices, rather than on the production of rifles and more complicated weapons. Some repair work is also carried on. The majority of the Viet Cong production facilities are located from Viet Cong Military Region VI south to Ca Mau. Annex A contains a list, by country of origin, of the types of Communist-supplied and locally produced weapons and ammunition captured by central government and US forces from the Viet Cong.



23. Most of the telecommunications equipment used by the Viet Cong consists of US-manufactured tactical radio sets captured from the South Vietnamese. The importance of this source of supply has been noted in Viet Cong communications plans and in the North Vietnamese program of training Viet Cong operators in the use of US equipment. The types of radio equipment captured range from handheld, low-power transceivers to relatively large, vehicle-mounted transmitters having power ratings of from 300 to 400 watts. This captured equipment has been augmented to a small extent by comparable equipment of Soviet, Chinese Communist, and Japanese manufacture, and by locally manufactured equipment. Spare parts and batteries are obtained by capture, infiltration, and purchase.

III. LAND INFILTRATION OF SUPPLIES AND PERSONNEL FROM NORTH VIETNAM

Supply Routes and Quantities of Supplies Moved

24. There is a scarcity of information on the overland movement of weapons, ammunition, and other military supplies from North Vietnam to the northern provinces of South Vietnam. It is apparent, however, that a major corridor from North Vietnam through Laos serves as a principal means of transporting supplies. Within this corridor, there are at least two distinct land routes. Both of these routes end in the same series of seasonal roads and trails leading to forward supply points. From these points in Laos, supplies are moved across the South Vietnamese border by means of porters, bicycles, ox carts, and pack animals.

25. The route from Mu Gia Pass via routes 12/23/9/92 is the higher capacity route. This road network is in part useable only in the dry season for through motor transport, but it can be used during the remainder of the year by a combination of methods. Its maximum use is from about mid-December through May or June to supply the Communist forces in the southern part of Laos and the Viet Cong in South Vietnam. Supplies from North Vietnam are trucked in stages along routes 1A and 15 through Mu Gia Pass into Laos and then south on routes 12 and 23 to supply dumps located along routes 23 and 9. <sup>4/</sup> Some supplies moving along this route eventually reach Ban Dong at the junction of routes 9 and 92 and then move down route 92 toward the South Vietnamese border. Although route 23 is a very important portion of this supply line, it is a seasonal road on which truck traffic is restricted from about June through November each year because of flooding and ground softening caused by the southwest monsoons. The Communists have nearly finished constructing route 911 as an alternate to parts of routes 23 and 9. When completed this road will reduce the distance from Mu Gia Pass to Sépône (Tchépône) by about one-third.

26. Before the completion of route 23 in 1962, some supplies for the Communist forces in southern Laos were moved by air. During January-June 1963, however, many large truck convoys were observed moving south on route 23. Although some of these trucks probably carried troops and supplies for the southern part of Laos, the remainder of the supplies may have been stockpiled or portered over the trails into the northern provinces of South Vietnam. Again in 1964 large convoys moved during the dry season only. Observation by road-watch teams was so incomplete in both years that it is impossible to estimate with

<sup>4/</sup> Reports from road-watch teams located near the southern end of route 23 close to route 9 have indicated that many convoys do not move all the way from route 23 to route 9 and that there is a lower level of traffic in this area than along the northern part of route 23.

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confidence the volume of supplies moved into the area, or to establish the amount of materiel which may have been stockpiled or moved on into South Vietnam. As a result of considerably improved reporting by the road-watch teams during the 1965 dry season, however, it is possible to estimate that the level of traffic moving south on route 23 averaged 17 trucks per day. (See Annex B.) Based on observations of the contents of about 10 percent of the trucks moving south, it is believed that they carried at least two tons each. It is also believed that the road was truckable for through traffic for a total of about 180 days during the dry season. This volume of traffic from December 1964 to June 1965 is calculated to have moved at least 35 tons of military supplies each day into the area of Laos served by route 23. Groups of porters were also observed occasionally moving south on this route. The traffic moving other than by truck throughout the year, however, is small in proportion to the truck traffic and intermittent. Its volume cannot be estimated. Nevertheless, such supplies supplement the volume moved by trucks and replace consumption to some extent.

27. It is estimated that the approximately 8,000 Communist troops stationed in the area of Laos south of route 12 during the 1965 dry season probably required an average of about 15 tons per day of logistic support from outside sources. Since the end of the dry season additional numbers of troops have been observed moving south into this area of Laos. The daily requirement for the original 8,000 troops declined during the wet season because of a lower level of activity, but this decline was probably partially offset by the requirements of the new troops moving into the area. During the 1965 dry season, truck traffic on route 23 delivered about 20 tons per day in excess of troop requirements. The largest amount needed by these forces during the wet season would be an amount equal to the requirement for the dry season, or 15 tons. If this is the case, only 5 tons per day of the total brought in by truck during the dry season would have been available for infiltration into South Vietnam, an average of about 3 tons per day throughout the year. <sup>5/</sup> On the other hand, if the supply requirement for the forces in Laos was reduced by one-half during the wet season, then about 12 tons would have been available for infiltration into South Vietnam, or an average of 6 tons throughout the year.

28. The lower capacity supply route from North Vietnam begins with a truck route south from Vinh to the area of the Demilitarized Zone. From this point the route consists of a network of trails, including a recently developed through route trafficable by light vehicles, that extend around the end of the Demilitarized Zone and cross route 9 near Ban Dong. This route provides a shorter, more secure access to the forward supply dumps in Laos. This route is

<sup>5/</sup> The Communists do not move supplies forward every day of the year, but, in order to convey an idea of the average amount available, the total tonnage has been spread throughout the year and expressed on a daily basis.

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probably used for infiltration of some critical items of military supply and for infiltration of personnel. There have been reports of the movement of supplies south toward Ban Dong over this trail system by porters, bicycles, and carts. Although there have not been enough of these reports to estimate with confidence the amount of supplies moving by these means, analysis of available data indicates that at least 2 tons per day are actually being delivered over the trails.

29. Route 92 south of route 9 is the beginning of a supply network that supports Communist activities in the southeastern area of the Laotian Panhandle and across the border into South Vietnam. This route acts as a funnel for supplies delivered both over route 23 and over the system west of the Demilitarized Zone. Route 92 extends south from Ban Dong for a distance of about 80 miles and ends at the Se Kong River, about 20 miles east of Saravane. Although the northern section possibly has a low all-season capability, the southern part is truckable only in the dry season. Route 92 south of Ban Dong has been developed by the Communists into a north-south main supply route from which at least three partially truckable feeder routes (routes 921, 922, and 923) lead to border-crossing points and forward supply depots. At least one of these routes (922) is an important supply route to South Vietnam. Analysis of aerial photography of 22 August 1965 indicated that vehicular activity has occurred on route 922 from its junction with route 92 to a point about 15 miles east where route 922 divides into two segments. Each of these 1-to-2 mile segments also showed evidence of recent vehicular activity. Thus it appears that supplies can be transported by truck over these routes to a point within about 5 miles of the border of South Vietnam. In the dry season, these routes would provide for through traffic from North Vietnam.

30. From the southern end of route 92 some supplies are moved south in native craft on the Se Kong River to route 165, which is a seasonably truckable route extending east toward the South Vietnamese border through a possible maneuver and training area. An improved trail also generally parallels the Se Kong River and connects the southern terminus of route 92 with the recently improved route 165 also leading to the South Vietnamese border. Photographic analysis showed that the section paralleling the Se Kong was being upgraded into a road at the end of the 1965 dry season. It is likely that the entire route paralleling the river will be upgraded after the present wet season. When this work is completed the Communists will have a second fair-weather truckable route from route 92 to the South Vietnamese border.

31. The total quantity of supplies moved south on route 92 during the 1965 dry season cannot be estimated, because traffic on the road has been observed only near its southern end. Analysis of photography indicates that some trucks leave route 92 north of the observers and move supplies on the feeder routes toward the South Vietnamese border. During the period February-June 1965, trained observers located about

70 miles south of Ban Dong reported that the level of truck traffic moving near the southern end of route 92 averaged about 1-1/2 trucks moving south per day. (See Annex B.) If it is estimated that these trucks carried about 2 tons each, a total of about 375 tons could have been moved south through the terminus of route 92 during the dry season. On an annual basis this quantity amounts to a daily average of slightly more than 1 ton that could have been moved forward from the end of route 92 toward the border of South Vietnam. Additional tonnage was moved over the upper access routes (routes 921, 922, and 923).

32. Intelligence indicates that porters are used to carry the bulk of the supplies from the forward depots in Laos across the border into South Vietnam. Although it is impossible to estimate the quantity of supplies actually crossing the border on a daily basis, about 5 tons per day could be moved over the difficult terrain in the area if 2,000 porters were engaged in cross-border delivery on a continuous basis. Some reports have indicated that up to 6,000 porters are intermittently engaged in cross-border delivery. If 6,000 persons were actually being used on a continuous basis, then approximately 15 tons per day could be moved across the border. Additional amounts could also be moved by such means of transport as bicycles, carts, and pack animals which are known to have been used by the Viet Cong.

33. It appears that the area adjacent to the route 92 main supply route is a Viet Cong/PAVN advanced communications zone containing an interconnecting land and water transportation system, troop facilities, maneuver and training areas, and logistic installations. During the past dry season (December 1964 - June 1965) the higher capacity route from North Vietnam through Mu Gia Pass could have delivered 5 to 12 tons per day, or 3 to 6 tons per day on an annual basis, to this area for use in infiltration to South Vietnam depending on the amount of consumption within Laos as noted above. (See paragraph 27.) The lower capacity route around the Demilitarized Zone delivers at least 2 tons per day on an annual basis. Therefore, although it is impossible to estimate with precision the total amount of supplies available for infiltration through Laos into South Vietnam, it appears that during the past dry season, the minimum would have been about 7 tons and the maximum about 14 tons. The daily average throughout the year would be at least 5 and could be more than 8 tons. These amounts may be supplemented by the supplies moved by porters and other means of transport and by local procurement, but this amount cannot be quantified. The actual amounts infiltrated into South Vietnam could also be reduced to the extent that some food may be required from sources outside of Laos to support the infiltration of personnel, way station personnel, and porters on the Laotian side of the border.

#### Types of Supplies Moved

34. The trucks that moved south on route 23 during the 1965 dry season carried such items as ammunition for small arms, mortars, and

recoilless rifles; explosives; gasoline; clothing; and foodstuffs such as rice, salt, flour, dried meat, and dried fish. The northbound trucks reportedly carried lumber, bamboo, and salvage items such as empty gasoline drums and tires. The contents of about half of the trucks moving near the southern end of route 92 were not observed, but almost 30 percent reportedly carried boxes, 15 percent a combination of arms, ammunition, and food, and the remainder sacks with unidentified cargo. About a third of the trucks moving north reportedly were empty. Many of the porters coming over the trails from near the western end of the Demilitarized Zone to route 92 or directly to points along the border of South Vietnam are reported to have carried weapons, ammunition, equipment, medical supplies, and foodstuffs.

#### Organizational Control

35. The infiltration routes through Laos and into the three northernmost provinces of South Vietnam apparently are under North Vietnamese control. However, Viet Cong Military Region V Headquarters in South Vietnam appears to share in the control of infiltration routes in the northern provinces and is probably the major controlling authority throughout the rest of Military Region V. Several interrogation reports indicate that as of mid-1964 the 70th Transportation Group controlled the porters and infiltrators on the trails through Laos. The 70th Transportation Group is under direct control of the PAVN High Command in Hanoi. This group maintains about 17 communications-liaison stations in Laos, with the first station located near the end of the Demilitarized Zone. A company of about 100 able-bodied men is located at each station to carry out transportation, security, communications, liaison, and guidance of infiltrators and locally conscripted porters. <sup>6/</sup> It is not known whether the supplies transported by truck down route 23 are also the responsibility of the 70th Transportation Group. It is possible that such supplies are turned over to the 70th Transportation Group at the end of the truck route. The 71st Transportation Group was reported to control a short segment of the route between A Rum, a village located near the end of route 922, and some point within Quang Nam Province. It was said to have at least 12 stations, with approximately one company at each station. At the border of South Vietnam near the boundary between Thua Thien and Quang Nam Provinces the supplies and infiltrators become the responsibility of both the 71st and 72nd Transportation Groups which maintain the communications-liaison route through Quang Nam to southern Quang Tin Province. The 72nd Transportation Group is reported to have

<sup>6/</sup> The apparent inconsistency between the reports of 100 men at each station and the reports of villagers having observed groups of up to 300 porters on the trails can be explained by the possibility that porters are recruited locally or are moved from one station to another whenever needed for unusually large movements.

had about 24 stations maintained by a total of 1,700 men. <sup>7/</sup> Thus, as of mid-1964, about 1,700 to 2,000 men possibly were maintaining the transportation corridor through Laos and another 3,000 or more were maintaining the routes in the northern part of South Vietnam, exclusive of road porters.

#### Modes of Transportation and Border Crossing Points

36. Trucks, porters, and native craft on the inland rivers are all used to some extent, depending on the season and location, to bring supplies to the South Vietnamese border. The staged movement by truck from North Vietnam into Laos has been described above. Along the trails the way stations are said to be located about one-half day's march apart. The short distances, anywhere from 4 to 12 miles, depending on terrain and the tactical situation, allow the porters to haul supplies to the next station and return to their home base within one working day. The extent to which this porter system is functioning at present and the methods and number of men being used are not known. An infiltrator captured in June 1965 reported that portions of the trails were being upgraded into roads and that he had seen trucks being used on portions of the route. Apparently he had observed route 922. Other infiltrators who crossed the border in early 1965 observed pack bicycles more often than porters. The use of bicycles would considerably reduce the number of porters needed. The porters carry loads of 40 to 60 pounds in back packs or on shoulder poles, whereas single or dual bicycles can carry loads of up to 500 pounds. (Annex C lists several additional methods used for packaging and transporting supplies.)

37. Only one waterway in Laos, the Se Kong River mentioned above, is known to be used to any extent as part of an infiltration route, although the alignment of other waterways, the Se Bang Hieng, Se Pone, and the Song Ben Hai, makes them suspect infiltration routes. Aerial photography of the Se Kong between the southern end of route 92 and the point where route 165 leaves the river reveals waterway improvements, native craft on the river, and portages of difficult sections. This waterway is navigable by canoes throughout the year, but its use during the dry season probably will be reduced when the road being built parallel to it is completed, possibly by the end of 1965. The Song Ben Hai/Rao Thanh waterway in the Demilitarized Zone forms the border between North and South Vietnam. Although infiltration across this river by teams of three to four men swimming or using small craft has been reported, infiltration of supplies across the river has not been observed. Use by canoes of this waterway throughout the year for lateral movement

<sup>7/</sup> Current Order of Battle estimates show two Viet Cong units designated as the Binh Son and Nam Son Transportation Groups operating in the northern three provinces. It is possible that these newly reported units represent a reorganization of the previously reported 71st and 72nd Transportation Groups.

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within the Demilitarized Zone to interior tracks, trails, and tributary streams providing access to South Vietnam is possible, however.

38. Apparently the major border crossing points (see the map at Annex) consist of the trail networks east and southeast of routes 921, 922, 923, and 165. However, the entire Laotian border adjoining the South Vietnamese provinces of Thua Thien, Quang Nam, Quang Tin, and Kontum is interlaced with trails, many of which probably are being used. Pinpointing specific border crossing points is impossible due to lack of information. Thick forest coverage of the roads and trails makes aerial reconnaissance of these routes difficult. Captured personnel, even the communications-liaison personnel who worked on the routes, lack knowledge of the routes used because of the strict security system applied to the infiltration process.

39. In summary, the Communists have developed major supply routes in Laos, have provided the logistical troops and organization to control and operate the routes, and are using them as the primary means of infiltrating supplies to the Viet Cong/PAVN forces in South Vietnam as well as to supply Pathet Lao/PAVN forces in Laos. During the past year the Communists have continued to construct new routes and improve old ones, which will have the effect of substantially increasing the capacity of the Laotian corridor. (See the map at Annex.) The amount of effort that the Communists have put into this road network is an indication of the increasing importance which they attach to this area as a line of communication to South Vietnam.

#### Infiltration of Personnel

40. Recent information obtained from interrogation of prisoners of war and from a summary of information accumulated since 1959, prepared by MACV, indicates that large numbers of personnel have infiltrated overland from North Vietnam through Laos into South Vietnam. The full scope of the personnel infiltration program, however, cannot be assessed on the basis of the documentary evidence now available. In 1955, following the Geneva Agreements of 1954, the Communists left behind several thousand well-trained military and political cadres when they retreated to the north. This apparatus continued to carry out low-level covert and overt political activities and to conduct occasional terrorist and harassing armed actions. This effort was stepped up in 1957. In 1959, elements of the 70th Transportation Group of the PAVN were sent into an area in southern Laos contiguous to the border of South Vietnam to establish relay stations connecting the southern part of North Vietnam with the northern area of South Vietnam. Infiltration routes developed over the years from North Vietnam through Laos have become the primary avenues used for the movement of personnel into South Vietnam. It is believed that the 70th Transportation Group remains in control of the infiltration of both men and material from North Vietnam through Laos into South Vietnam.



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41. From 1959 through 20 September 1965, about 48,000 men are believed to have infiltrated from North Vietnam to South Vietnam as follows:

<u>Category</u>	<u>1959-60</u>	<u>1961</u>	<u>1962</u>	<u>1963</u>	<u>1964</u>	<u>1965</u>	<u>Totals</u>
1-2 <u>a/</u>	4,556 <u>b/</u>	4,118	5,362	4,726	6,301	3,375	28,438
3 <u>c/</u>	26	516	5,842 <u>d/</u>	1,227	1,752	1,595	10,958
4 <u>e/</u>	0	1,661	1,653	1,935	2,340	737	8,326
Totals	4,582	6,295	12,857	7,888	10,393	5,707	47,722

a/ Figures for Category 1 were based on information obtained from two or more sources. Figures for Category 2 were based on statements of captives, which for the most part were confirmed by other sources.

b/ Possibly 2,756 infiltrators have been counted twice.

c/ Figures for Category 3 were derived from statements of captives interrogated by the Military Intelligence Center or the National Interrogation Center. Their statements, although probably true, have not been confirmed by other sources.

d/ Possibly 4,000 infiltrators have been counted twice.

e/ Figures for Category 4 were derived from statements obtained from other captives.

The infiltrators consisted of military, political, security, economic, financial, and education specialists. It is significant that, prior to 1964, essentially all the infiltrators were South Vietnamese who had been relocated in North Vietnam after 1954. Since 1964, about half the infiltrators are believed to have been native North Vietnamese the bulk of which remained in the northern provinces. The fact that the major elements of a PAVN division are now considered to be south of the 17th Parallel underscores the change in the character of the infiltration program. While moving on the trails through Laos, the infiltrators carried some supplies to South Vietnam. These supplies included medicines, radios, and various types of weapons, such as pistols, grenades, carbines, rifles, machineguns, and recoilless rifles. Sometimes this equipment was not retained by the infiltration group that carried it into South Vietnam. The infiltration trip usually required between 45 days and 4 months. However, the Viet Cong rely primarily on local recruitment to maintain their regular and guerrilla force strength.

IV. SEA INFILTRATION OF SUPPLIES FROM NORTH VIETNAM

Supply Routes

42. The Communists have used seaborne infiltration to transport some men and supplies from North Vietnam into South Vietnam. The number of personnel infiltrated by sea has been small and the primary emphasis has been on the infiltration of supplies. These supplies are believed to have been used principally to build stockpiles in the coastal areas of South Vietnam for further distribution to the Viet Cong.

43. Seaborne infiltration operations have originated in two general areas in North Vietnam -- in the north, near Haiphong, and in the south, along the coast between Ben Thuy and the 17th Parallel. Numerous embarkation points and logistic supply bases have been reported. The routes used by infiltration craft have varied according to the type of mission, the type of craft, and the season of the year. Infiltration by sea from North Vietnam reportedly has taken place in past years primarily from December through August because of the rough seas usually encountered during the rest of the year. One source, who participated in several infiltration missions, mentioned two routes, a "near-shore" route, paralleling the coast at about 3 miles offshore, and a "distant-shore" route, ranging from 50 to 100 miles from the coast. The distant-shore route has probably been used in past years by the larger-capacity craft. Some of the smaller craft involved in infiltration from North Vietnam reportedly have left the northern areas and stopped at ports in the southern area of the country before continuing their trip into South Vietnam. Other craft have transited the Hainan Straits on their way to the south. Some unconfirmed reports state that seaborne infiltration also has been conducted from foreign ships which have stopped off the coast of South Vietnam while cargo was unloaded into lighters that transferred it to shore.

44. Seaborne infiltration of supplies and personnel into South Vietnam has taken place at least since 1957. A boat captain, who was captured in 1963 with members of his crew, reported that since 1957 he had worked for an organization that had been engaged in seaborne infiltration into South Vietnam. A Viet Cong medical officer captured in 1965 stated that he infiltrated by sea in October 1964. He boarded a 70-foot steel-hulled ship at Haiphong, passed through Hainan Straits, sailed near Poulo Condore, Poulo Obi, and then into a stream on the Ca Mau Peninsula. This source indicated that the organization that infiltrated him had made about 20 deliveries to South Vietnam between 1961 and October 1964. In late 1964, an unidentified junk was sighted aground and burning off Kien Hoa Province. Intelligence reports indicated later that this craft was a Viet Cong supply junk that had run aground and been blown up by the Viet Cong to keep it from being captured.

45. Movement of substantial quantities of arms to South Vietnam by larger craft has also been confirmed. In February 1965, a 120-foot steel-hulled ship was discovered and sunk in Vung Ro Bay and a nearby arms cache of about 1,500 weapons and from 40 to 60 tons of supplies and ammunition was seized. This materiel was probably carried there by ship from North Vietnam. Another large cache was discovered in April 1965 during a search and destroy operation on the Coast of Kien Hoa Province.

46. While there is little hard evidence to support many of the reports received, boats or ships have been reported during past years to have unloaded in most of the 21 coastal provinces of South Vietnam (see the map at Annex). Most of the landings are reported to have taken place in the four northern coastal provinces of South Vietnam -- Quang Tri, Thua Thien, Quang Nam, and Quang Tin -- and in the southern part of the country from Binh Tuy Province around the Cape of Ca Mau to the Cambodian border, including the offshore island of Phu Quoc. Small junks and sampans have reportedly engaged in infiltration from North Vietnam to the northern provinces of South Vietnam, whereas larger craft have reportedly carried supplies to many points along the southern coast of South Vietnam, roughly south of the 10th Parallel, with craft waiting offshore until landings could be made under cover of darkness. In this respect it should be noted that shallow water extending well offshore is an impediment to sea infiltration in the southern delta area of South Vietnam, in some cases requiring lightering with small craft.

#### Organizational Control

47. At least seven North Vietnamese organizations reportedly have been associated with seaborne infiltration of Viet Cong personnel and supplies into South Vietnam. These are (1) the Ong-Xa Group, reportedly a military organization in existence between 1959 and 1960; (2) the 603rd Special Battalion of the PAVN, reportedly a special maritime infiltration unit stationed south of Gianh River; (3) the Unification Agency, reportedly in existence from 1956 to at least 1964; (4) the Central Research Directorate, the chief intelligence authority reportedly involved in the direction and movement of espionage and intelligence personnel to South Vietnam; (5) Group 125, probably subordinate to the North Vietnamese Naval High Command; (6) the 103rd Transport Battalion; and (7) the Lao Dong Party/People's Revolutionary Party. The complete absence of reports since 1963 on the first two organizations makes it probable that they have been disbanded, reorganized, or merged with other infiltration organizations.

48. In 1965 an additional method of sea infiltration has been noted. This method has consisted of the Viet Cong obtaining South Vietnamese craft and crews on a temporary basis by either hiring or

coercing owners and personnel. The crews have then taken the craft to North Vietnam, where supplies were loaded, and the craft then returned to South Vietnam. For example, five Viet Cong were captured and ammunition and weapons were recovered from a junk engaged in this kind of operation that was scuttled off Quang Tri Province in March 1965. The organization responsible for instigating this type of operation is unknown.

#### Forms of Sea Transportation Used

49. Many types of ships and small craft have been used in infiltrating supplies into South Vietnam for the Viet Cong, including wooden junks and sampans, small steel-hulled ships, and possibly oceangoing freighters. Some of the North Vietnamese craft involved are apparently faster and better armed than the junks of the South Vietnamese Junk Fleet. The infiltration ship sunk at Vung Ro on 16 February 1965, for example, was a 120-foot, steel-hulled ship with an estimated cargo capacity of 100 tons and a cruising speed of 8 knots. The motorized craft of the Junk Fleet have a speed of only 6 to 8 knots.

50. An additional factor which tends to obscure the sea infiltration situation is the large amount of normal South Vietnamese traffic operating in the coastal waters off South Vietnam. Because of the magnitude of this traffic, which consists primarily of fishing and coastal vessels, it is very difficult to detect North Vietnamese or Viet Cong craft which might be engaged in infiltrating new supplies or moving supplies previously landed. Since about 10 percent of the 50,000 commercial craft registered with the South Vietnamese government are off the coast on any given day, the problems involved in detecting any planned infiltration movements are formidable. Although approximately 500 craft are searched each day, sightings may run as high as 5,000 junks and large sampans per day during good weather. Thus the potential for infiltration by coastal junks is very large. The primary problem in detecting infiltration or Viet Cong sea activity remains identification of craft. Infiltrating junks can cover their activity by mingling with coastal traffic or remaining well out to sea and making landfalls with the fishing fleets as they make their normal daily movements.

#### Types and Quantities of Supplies Moved

51. The types of military supplies that have entered South Vietnam by sea have included weapons, ammunition, food, clothing, and medical supplies. It appears that sea infiltration has provided an important means of supply to the Viet Cong in South Vietnam. However, the sporadic nature of sea movements, the infrequency of detection, and the small number of voyages by any given craft in the course of a year make it very difficult to establish an order of magnitude for shipments by sea. It is quite possible also that the pattern of sea

infiltration has changed during 1965. The absence of any further incidents involving steel-hulled infiltration ships since the Vung Ro sinking in February suggests that the Viet Cong may now be using only smaller craft which are more easily concealed. Reports of incidents of sea infiltration involving junks have continued in 1965. A small craft of this type probably could make one trip a month for 9 months of the year between North Vietnam and South Vietnam and could carry about 4 or more tons of supplies each trip. (High seas during the last quarter of the year make it impractical for small craft to be used for infiltration during that period.) Thus, if only 10 small craft were directly involved in sea infiltration, a total of 360 tons could be transported during the year, or approximately one ton per day on an annual basis. Normally this amount would be sufficient to stock or restock several storage areas. Steel-hulled ships or the larger junks used for infiltration could carry 50 to 100 tons per trip. Even one or two successful deliveries by ships of this type would add substantially to the amount of material infiltrated in any given year.

# V. INFILTRATION OF SUPPLIES FROM CAMBODIA

## Supply Routes

52. Some supplies for the Viet Cong have entered South Vietnam from Cambodia, according to firm evidence from prisoner interrogations, captured documents, and the actual capture of supplies in transit. Other evidence to this effect has been compiled from agent sources. Although most of these supplies and materials were either indigenous to Cambodia, or arrived in Cambodia through normal trade channels, some supplies have probably moved in clandestine channels. From Cambodia supplies have been moved into South Vietnam by the following routes and methods: (a) by sampan or junk on the inland waterways; (b) by porters on the trails that approach or cross the South Vietnamese border; and (c) by sampan or junk from Cambodian ports to islands in the Gulf of Siam and to the west coast of South Vietnam. A substantial open but illegal trade has also been taking place between South Vietnam and Cambodia, especially in the Mekong Delta. The general locations of the major routes are indicated on the map at Annex. Many points along the border between Cambodia and South Vietnam have been identified as Viet Cong border crossings; Tay Ninh and Chau Doc <sup>8/</sup> have been the two provinces most often cited. The relative importance of each area, route, or mode cannot be determined from available information. It appears, however, that the Viet Cong have shifted back and forth from land to water transport and from one area of entry to another as the need and tactical situation have changed.

53. Use of inland water transport to cross the border is more important in the southern and delta area than in the northeastern part of Cambodia. Four inland water routes -- the Se San, the Srepok, and its two tributaries -- provide access from Cambodia to Kontum, Pleiku, and Darlac Provinces in the central area. These waterways can accommodate small native craft only, and, although few reports are available to indicate that the Viet Cong have used these water routes, their significance is accentuated by the scarcity of roads serving the area. There are six waterways, including the Mekong, that provide access to the southern or delta area. For the most part, these southern rivers could be navigated by craft as large as small oceangoing steamers. Smaller waterways provide connections to most points in the delta area.

54. Water transport on the Mekong-Bassac River complex was one of the major means of moving supplies from Cambodia into South Vietnam as late as 1964. During 1963 a significant quantity of supplies, particularly potassium chlorate, a chemical used in making explosives, was captured by South Vietnamese patrols on the rivers. One shipment was seized by a Cambodian river patrol. Since 1963 reported seizures

<sup>8/</sup> Formerly part of An Giang Province.

of supplies on the rivers have practically ceased. This situation may reflect the lack of South Vietnamese border control or may mean that the Viet Cong have developed other water transport routes or are relying more heavily on land routes. A shift from water to land transport was revealed in 1964 in a captured document from the Finance and Economic Section of the Chau Thanh District Party Committee of Tay Ninh Province which stated that its transport units had to use cross-country land routes because movements by water were often stopped and searched. The use of water transport by the Viet Cong undoubtedly has continued, however, because some areas can be reached only by water transport or by a combination of land and water transport. A description of a logistic system on a river route was revealed by a Vietnamese junk crew that was captured in 1963 on the Mekong River near the border. The chemicals that they were carrying were smuggled from Phnom Penh by water to a point within 1 mile of the border. The chemicals were then transferred to small junks of 2 or 3 tons capacity that were manned by personnel hired to take the junks downstream at night to about 5 miles below the border from where other crews took over. The materials were well camouflaged in sacks under layers of sand, salt, or fruit or in false bottoms and overheads of the boats. Another informant stated that the Viet Cong manned the boats themselves when certain materials such as rifles and ammunition were being transported.

55. Land routes provide access at many points along the Cambodian border for Viet Cong cadres, supporters, or purchasing agents to obtain supplies as necessary. Four of the major land routes that enter South Vietnam through Tay Ninh Province have been used to transport weapons, ammunition, and other military equipment. Two routes enter the province from the north, one from the west, and one from the south. The Viet Cong, according to one source, have assembled as many as 300 porters at one time to carry their supplies across the border. Evidence exists that before crossing the border the porters have left the roads and fanned out onto the complex of trails to portage their loads. In other cases purchasing agents have mingled with the local traffic that crosses the border by vehicle or on foot. Chau Doc Province, located on the south side of the Mekong, is another area through which supply routes pass. In March 1963 a Cambodian provincial guard reported that the Viet Cong crossed the border almost nightly in this area. He stated that supplies were taken to the border and were picked up there by the Viet Cong. Evidence continues to support the use of this route. There is also probably a route into Phuoc Long Province.

56. Seaborne infiltration operations have been conducted from Cambodia. Some materials infiltrated from Cambodia have been carried first to Phu Quoc, Phu Du, or one of the other nearby islands, and finally to the western coast of South Vietnam. Reports suggest the continued use of this route, but the amounts infiltrated are unknown.

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### Organizational Control

57. The infiltration of supplies from Cambodia is under the control of the Viet Cong People's Revolutionary Party apparatus in the border area. A component of the apparatus is the above-mentioned Finance and Economic Section of the Chau Thanh District Party Committee of Tay Ninh Province. This section may be only one of many such organizations along the border. According to a captured document, in May 1964 the section was composed of a section chief with his deputy and five helpers and three units or cells. One unit consisted of five men who recruited seven Cambodians and four Vietnamese tradesmen to purchase goods in Cambodia and three other men who were only in charge of purchases of goods from local markets. Another unit consisted of a village organized into five water transport units and twelve land transport units. The third was a motorboat cell. In May 1964 the section purchased in Cambodia about 15 tons of supplies, including many types of food, cloth, dry-cell batteries, electric wire, and medicine. In addition, the list of purchased items included about 90 animals.

### Types of Supplies Moved

58. Most of the supplies procured in or through Cambodia have generally consisted of materials that can be purchased on the open market, although arms and ammunition also have been infiltrated from Cambodia. There is evidence from prisoners of war that Viet Cong units located in areas adjacent to the Cambodian border north of the Mekong Delta have on occasion in the past purchased substantial quantities of food in Cambodia. However, Cambodia is by no means a major source of food supplies to the Viet Cong, who depend primarily on the Vietnamese countryside and population for their subsistence. There is also reliable evidence that the Viet Cong clandestine apparatus in Phnom Penh has regularly purchased drugs and medical supplies in the open market in Cambodia to be taken into South Vietnam. Also, there are indications that some radios, batteries, and tubes have been procured in Cambodia. Although an appreciable amount of Viet Cong medical and other supplies have been procured in Cambodia, most of these items have apparently been procured in South Vietnam or have been brought in from North Vietnam.

59. There are reliable reports to the effect that the Viet Cong apparatus in Phnom Penh has raised some funds for the Viet Cong by soliciting contributions from Vietnamese minority elements in Cambodia generally unsympathetic to the government of South Vietnam. However, these contributions were small in comparison with the large amounts obtained through the variety of taxes levied on the Vietnamese population in South Vietnam.

60. The extent to which Cambodia is used either as a transfer area or as a source of arms and ammunition is difficult to assess. Reports have indicated that arms have been moved from Cambodia to South Vietnam.

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Evidence, including the testimony of numerous Viet Cong prisoners who were engaged in supply operations from Cambodia, indicates that such movements probably are small in terms of the total amount of such material infiltrated into South Vietnam.

#### Viet Cong Bases in Cambodian Territory

61. There is considerable evidence, including reports of US Special Forces advisors, that the Viet Cong use Cambodian territory in some areas along the 600-mile border for sanctuary and bivouac purposes for varying periods of time. There is also some evidence that they have established temporary military facilities, such as rest camps, training areas, hospitals, workshops, and storage depots on Cambodian soil. Most reports of such facilities have been obtained from captured personnel, defectors, [REDACTED] In addition, Viet Cong elements have frequently been located on Cambodian soil by airborne radio direction finding.

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#### Cambodian Government Collusion

62. There is no question that the Cambodian government has taken an attitude increasingly favorable to the Communists in the Vietnamese situation. The Cambodian government has expressed its official goodwill diplomatically and politically for the NFLSV, but stated that Cambodian neutrality forbids its operational and logistic cooperation. Sihanouk supports the NFLSV's claim to represent the Vietnamese people, he has presented medical supplies to North Vietnam, and he has presided at a ceremony in which medical supplies were presented to a representative of the NFLSV. He also participated in negotiations concerning the Cambodian/South Vietnamese border with representatives of North Vietnam and the Front in December 1964, although he was disappointed in these negotiations as neither the Front nor Hanoi was willing to give him the border guarantees he desired.

63. There is no hard evidence, however, that the central Cambodian government has actively provided logistic support to the Viet Cong, beyond the gift of medical supplies mentioned above. There is no conclusive evidence that Communist arms which were brought in openly through Sihanoukville were intended for other than the Cambodian armed forces, although it is possible that some may have ultimately gone to the Viet Cong. It is also possible, however, that the Cambodian Ministry of Commerce knowingly assisted the Viet Cong by granting licenses to Cambodian firms to import explosives and other materials in excess of domestic needs for eventual diversion to the Viet Cong. The Cambodian government did, however, seize a shipment of potassium chlorate moving down the Mekong in September 1963 and turned the confiscated material over to the royal palace for the manufacture of fireworks.

64. There is evidence of cooperation with the Viet Cong at lower Cambodian government and military levels. In some areas along the border, the Viet Cong are permitted to take refuge from South Vietnamese military forces, at times with the active assistance of Cambodian armed forces. There have even been some reports of Cambodian and Viet Cong troops fighting together against South Vietnamese troops, and Viet Cong prisoners of war in 1964 stated that the Cambodian troops attempted to cover up their cooperation with the insurgents. Prisoners have also reported that local Cambodian authorities have made no effort to interfere with Viet Cong procurement of supplies in Cambodia. Other reports indicate that in some areas the Cambodians have tried to police the border against the Viet Cong, and against South Vietnamese troops with whom they frequently clash.

65. In sum, the Viet Cong use of Cambodian territory is due to active Cambodian cooperation in some areas, a laissez-faire attitude in others, and the inability or failure of the Cambodian government to control or even patrol its frontiers, particularly in isolated regions. Central government policy, while generally favorable to the Viet Cong, stops short of military support.

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# VI. INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION OF SUPPLIES

## Organizational Control

66. Internal distribution of infiltrated supplies and transportation of locally procured goods are basic elements of the Viet Cong logistics network. About 14,000 personnel, exclusive of enforced labor, are used on a full-time basis. Viet Cong emphasis on the importance of local self-sufficiency testifies to efforts to reduce the internal logistics task. On the other hand, the existence of known internal logistics operations confirms that the requirements for internal distribution and transportation are substantial.

67. Viet Cong logistics operations are organized at all levels from COSVN to the village Party chapter. At every major echelon of the Party, the Viet Cong have a route protection or communications-liaison section whose mission is to establish, maintain, and supervise safe corridor routes for the flow of men, materiel, and messages. For security reasons, the Viet Cong appear to maintain separate routes for these transport tasks with the organizational subordination of any given task determined by the nature and importance of the task. The route protection and communications-liaison section of the Party exercises a crucial role in approving and safeguarding all types of logistics support operations. An estimated 2,000 or more Party cadre are probably directly associated with the communications-liaison function as guides, security personnel, station attendants, and supervisory personnel. In general, these sections supervise the work of the two basic transport organizations -- the Rear Services transport units and the Finance and Economic transport units.

68. Special and organic transport elements directed by the Rear Services are found at all military echelons from COSVN to local (regular) forces. The military elements of COSVN and the Viet Cong military regions control special military transport units which appear to be primarily concerned with the receipt and redistribution of infiltrated supplies. About 5,800 personnel are associated with these special military transport units subject to region or Central Office level control, according to MACV. In addition, every military echelon of the main and local forces has an organic transport element under its Rear Services to provide logistic support for its military and non-military requirements. An estimated 4,000 to 5,000 personnel are associated with these organic transport units.

69. The second basic element involved in internal distribution and transport consists of the transport units of the Finance and Economic Section of the Party. These transport units appear to be generally responsible for transferring goods acquired locally to depots established within their area. In most cases, it is believed that the organized transport element of the Finance and Economic element is relatively small and is primarily responsible for recruiting local civilian

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personnel to accomplish movement of supplies. In some cases, however, where the movement of civilian-type goods is substantial, nonmilitary transport units have been permanently established under the Finance and Economic Section. About 2,000 personnel are probably permanently associated with transport elements of the Finance and Economic Section.

#### Redistribution Routes and Storage Areas

70. Personnel, infiltrators, and supplies acquired from both internal and external sources are moved over a fairly well-established network of protected routes within the Viet Cong-controlled areas of South Vietnam. The network includes an interconnected system of depots and way stations all the way from Thua Thien and Quang Nam Provinces in the north to the Ca Mau peninsula in the south. There are two roughly parallel north-south corridors, one of which closely follows the western border of the country and is used mainly for personnel. The other corridor is located nearly midway between the coast and the western border and extends from the highland region above the Do Xa base area to War Zone D northeast of Saigon. It is probably used for both personnel and materiel. These two corridors have several lateral routes leading east and west to and from infiltration points along the coast and the Laos and Cambodian borders. Both internal main corridors connect with COSVN base areas in Tay Ninh Province north of Saigon. Here COSVN apparently maintains the principal agency for coordinating operations over the entire system. This has been identified as the Postal Transportation and Communication Branch. The Tay Ninh base in turn forms the principal connection with at least three other corridors including the remainder of the network which forms a loop within the Mekong Delta region. See the map at Annex for location of the Viet Cong war zones, storage areas, and main redistribution corridors, and Annex D for organizational chart.

71. Study of the routes, when plotted in detail on a map, shows that this logistic network relies heavily on overland movement and that the principal motorable roads are generally not used. Principal waterways are used, however, in the delta region and several land routes follow streams (probably for guidance at night). It is also noted that a major portion of the network is located at or near provincial boundaries where South Vietnamese surveillance may be least effective. Comparison of this network with a map of the current status of pacification shows that a considerable part of the transport system runs through unsecured territory which may be controlled by the South Vietnamese in the daytime but is used by the Viet Cong at night when most of their supply movements take place.

72. Supply depots which would normally have a nominal capacity of from 5 to 10 tons of supplies each are sometimes connected with the way stations and are controlled by the appropriate logistic organization. Although classes of supplies in these depots are usually mixed, some

contain only weapons and ammunition, and some handle food exclusively. A typical depot may be described as consisting of a small cluster of huts or shelters surrounded by a security fence and occasionally an automatic weapons emplacement, all well concealed under foliage. A minimum of traffic is allowed at the depot, deliveries by transport units being made at some distance from the depot with final haul and storage made by the depot cadre. According to Viet Cong documents, supplies are moved in stages and handled through as many depots as necessary to insure their security and to build up a reserve for support of an engagement by Viet Cong forces. In 1963, when Viet Cong forces in the central highlands were considerably smaller than at present, food depots were limited to a maximum of 5 tons because of the threat of South Vietnamese government action. Although the size of these depots has probably been increased, the fragmentation of storage areas is a basic constraint on the rapid initiation of large-scale Viet Cong actions.

73. Because the communications-liaison routes often run across open country or over back roads and the Viet Cong do not possess any sizeable inventory of motor trucks, much of the shipment of supplies is handled by teams of porters provided by the local village and district Viet Cong organizations. Other forms of transport have also been utilized in significant amounts in the lowlands and in the delta region, including trains of oxcarts, river and coastal water craft, "hired" three-wheeler Lambretta-type motorcycle carriers, and occasionally commandeered cargo trucks. Movements by the transport units are secured by route protection forces usually assigned from local guerrilla units. These security troops may conduct raids near the routes as a diversion to screen movements of supplies over more exposed sectors.

74. It has been impossible to estimate the volume of supplies handled over internal Viet Cong supply routes. One set of pertinent figures, however, has become available in documentation concerning the supply corridor from Kien Hoa to Tay Ninh. Possibly referring to performance in 1964, one Viet Cong official had entered in his notes that this corridor had handled over 200 tons of "strategic" goods and 31 tons of "party" goods on shipments from probable coastal delivery points in Kien Hoa Province to War Zone C over a distance of approximately 120 miles and passing within 30 miles of Saigon.

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2. USSR

a. Weapons:

7.62-mm Carbine, Model M44  
7.62-mm Rifle, Model M1891  
7.62-mm Sub-machinegun, Model PPSH 41  
7.62-mm Light machinegun, Model RP46  
23-mm Cannon

b. Ammunition:

7.62-mm Cartridge, Model P  
7.62-mm Cartridge, API, Model B-32

3. Czechoslovakia

a. Weapons:

7.65-mm Pistol, Model M1927, N B46

b. Ammunition (sample of each type exploited):

7.92-mm Cartridge, rifle  
7.92-mm Cartridge, Mauser

4. Viet Cong-Produced Materiel

a. Weapons and Explosive Devices:

Skyhorse (VC-Type Bazooka)  
Grenade launcher  
AA Machinegun (modified from US .50-caliber MG)  
AT Parachute hand grenade  
Bicycle mine  
Mine delay firing device  
Shaped charge (2 types)  
Shaped mine, short cone type  
Hollow cone mine, non-electric  
AP mine, cylindrical type  
AP fragmentation grenades (2 types)  
AT mine, cast iron fragmentation  
AT mine (constructed from British 100-mm mortar shell)  
AT mine, iron case, cylindrical  
AT mine, wooden, box type  
Mine, turtle shaped, cement  
Mine, turtle shaped, sheet metal  
Mine, betel box shaped, cement  
Mine, round volume type, sheet metal  
Mine, round mound type, cement

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ANNEX A

TYPES OF COMMUNIST-SUPPLIED AND LOCALLY PRODUCED WEAPONS AND AMMUNITION  
CAPTURED FROM THE VIET CONG  
BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

1. Communist China

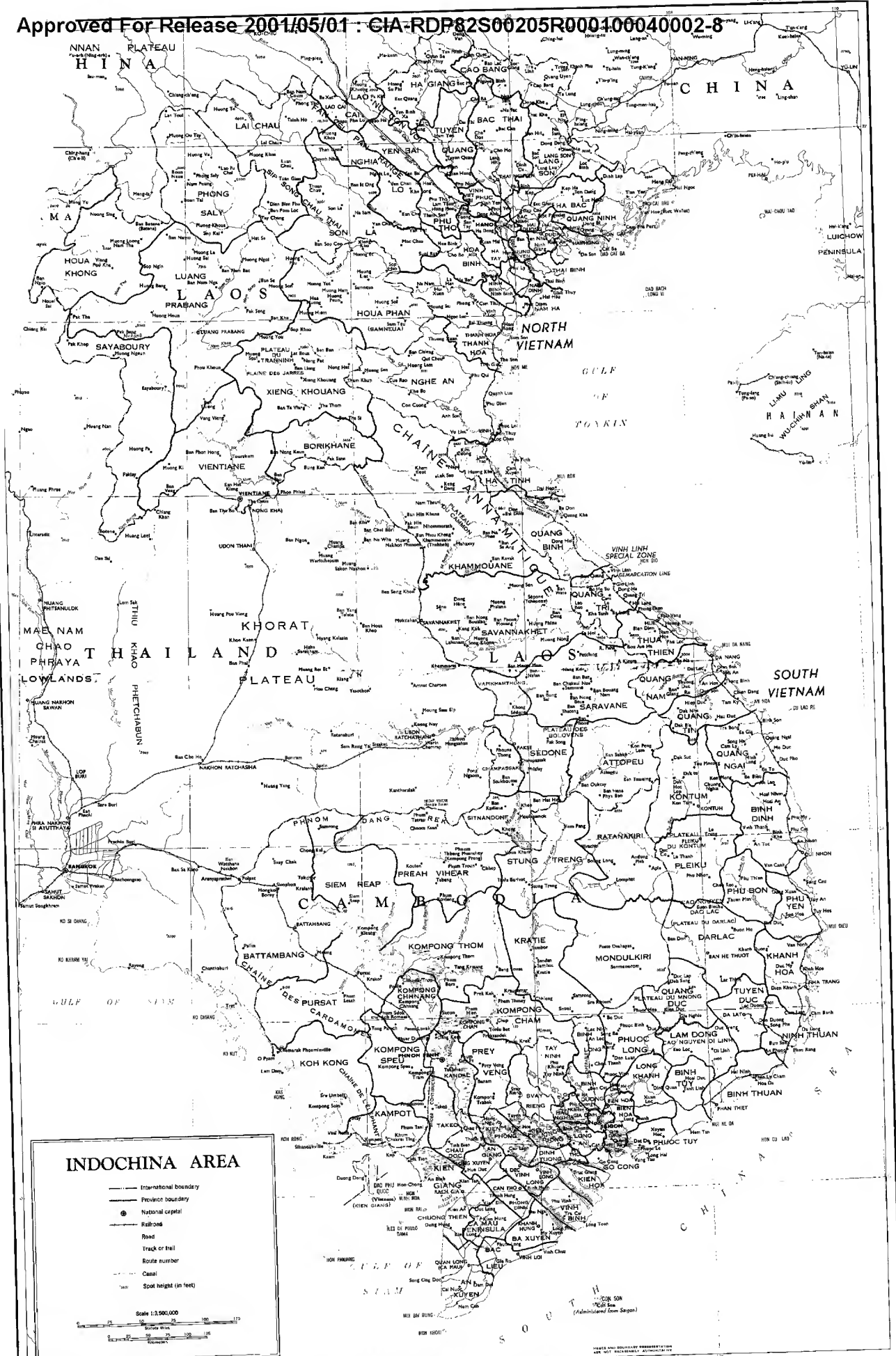
a. Weapons:

7.62-mm Pistol, Model 54  
7.62-mm Semi-automatic carbine, Model 56 (copy of Soviet SKS)  
7.62-mm Carbine, Model 53 (copy of Soviet M44)  
7.62-mm Assault rifle, Model 56 (copy of Soviet AK)  
7.62-mm Sub-machinegun, Model 50  
7.62-mm Sub-machinegun, Model K50  
7.62-mm Sub-machinegun (copy of Soviet PPSH) VC modified  
7.62-mm Light machinegun, Model 53 (copy of Soviet DP)  
7.62-mm Light machinegun, Model 56 (copy of Soviet RPD)  
7.62-mm Heavy machinegun, Model 58 (copy of Soviet GORYUNOV)  
7.92-mm Light machinegun (copy of BRNO)  
7.92-mm Heavy machinegun, Model 24 (copy of Soviet MAXIM)  
12.7-mm Heavy machinegun, Model 54 (copy of Soviet DShK)  
40-mm Grenade launcher, Model 56 (copy of Soviet RPG-2)  
57-mm Recoilless gun (rifle), Model 36  
75-mm Recoilless gun (rifle), Model 52 (copy of US M20)  
75-mm Recoilless gun (rifle), Model 56  
Flame thrower (tentatively CHICOM)  
60-mm Mortar, Model 31  
82-mm Mortar  
90-mm AT Rocket launcher, Model 51

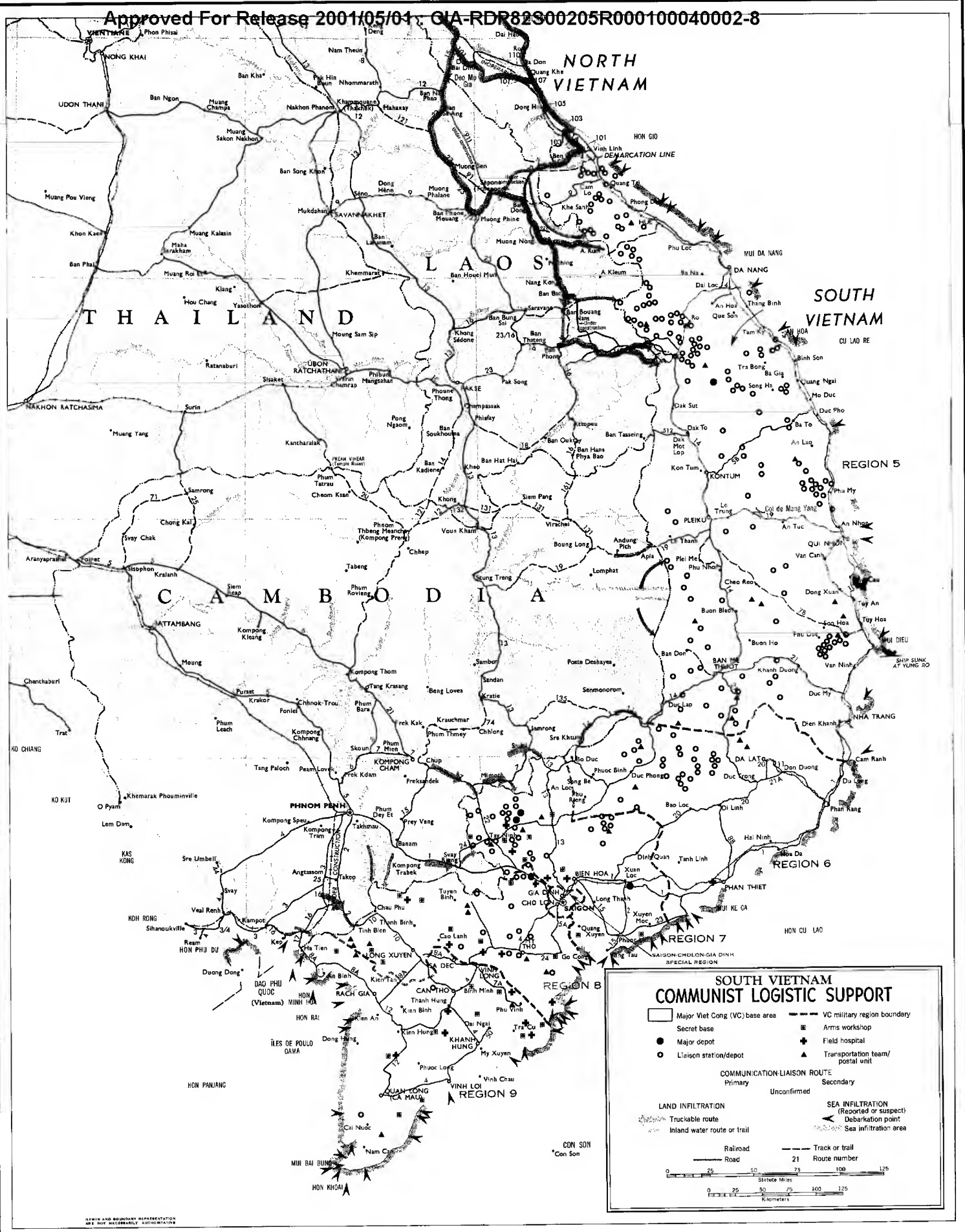
b. Ammunition:

7.62-mm Cartridge, Model P  
7.62-mm Cartridge, Model 50  
7.62-mm Cartridge, Model 53  
7.62-mm Cartridge, Model 56  
7.62-mm Cartridge, Model L  
7.62-mm Cartridge, Model API B32  
7.92-mm Cartridge  
12.7-mm Cartridge  
40-mm Grenade, PG-2  
60-mm Shell, mortar  
82-mm Shell, mortar  
75-mm Shell, Recoilless gun

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Mine, 81-mm mortar container  
Fixed directional fragmentation mine, Model DH-10  
Incendiary grenade, sodium  
Chemical firing device  
AP mine, match box size  
Antenna detonating device

ANNEX B

COMMUNIST TRUCK TRAFFIC REPORTED BY OBSERVERS ON  
SELECTED ROUTES IN SOUTHERN LAOS  
DECEMBER 1964 - JUNE 1965

Route Number and Month	Number of Trucks Reported Moving		Number of Days Covered by Reports	Average Number of Trucks Moving Per Day <u>a/</u>	
	South	North		South	North
<u>Route 23 b/</u>					
December 1964 <u>c/</u>	185	12	5	37	2
January 1965	337	324	22	15	15
February 1965	311	172	27	12	6
March 1965 <u>d/</u>	481	658	30	16	22
April 1965	640	775	30	21	26
May 1965	340	541	24	14	23
Total	<u>2,294</u>	<u>2,482</u>	<u>138</u>	17	18
<u>Route 92 e/</u>					
February 1965	13	15	19	0.7	0.8
March 1965	11	12	21	0.5	0.6
April 1965	66	58	20	3.3	2.9
May 1965	27	35	26	1.0	1.3
1-5 June 1965	7	7	5	1.4	1.4
Total	<u>124</u>	<u>127</u>	<u>91</u>	1.4	1.4

a/ Total number of trucks reported during the month divided by the number of days covered by reports during the month.

b/ Based on reports from a road-watch team located in an area about 30 miles southeast of the junction with route 12.

c/ Of these trucks, 170 were reported from other points on days when there was no coverage in this area. Since these 170 trucks would have had to pass this area, they have been included in this tabulation.

d/ The direction of an additional 4 trucks was not given.

e/ Based on reports from trained observers located about 10 miles from the southern terminus of the route at the Se Kong River. Reports are not available for December 1964 or January 1965.

ANNEX C

METHODS OF PACKAGING AND  
TRANSPORTING SUPPLIES

1. Supplies are packaged in boxes, crates, bags, or other means normally used for market transactions or in sizes, shapes, and weights that can be handled by one porter. Listed below are some of the methods used:

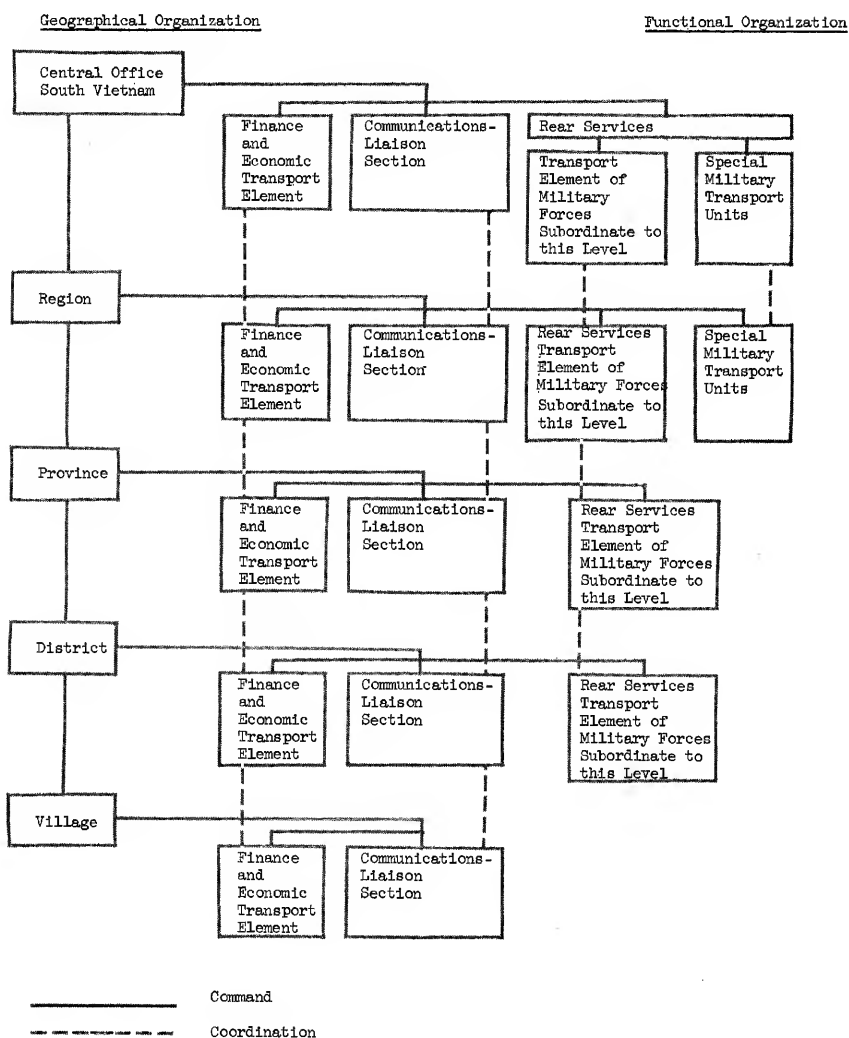
- a. Rice in 220-pound fiber bags or sacks.
- b. Rice in 22-pound to 33-pound tubular cloth sacks carried over the shoulder or across the back.
- c. Salt in bags or sacks.
- d. Ammunition in squared, wooden boxes or cases, about 50 pounds each.
- e. Shoulder weapons wrapped in oil soaked rags or waterproof paper.
- f. Fuel in standard barrels or in cans of about 5 gallons each.
- g. Fish in cans or dried and salted in sacks.
- h. Meat, usually dried, in sacks.
- i. Clothing in sacks.
- j. Medicines in bottles or syrettes, in sizes that can be concealed on a person.
- k. Chemicals: Saltpeter in 220-pound units; sulphur in 110-pound to 220-pound units; acid in less than one-quart bottles; mercury in containers weighing about 22 pounds.

2. Transportation methods vary but are generally as follows:

- a. By vehicles -- car or truck.
- b. By human porters with 40-pound to 60-pound loads in back packs or shoulder poles, traveling in teams of 10 to 100 men.
- c. Single or dual bicycles with up to 500-pound loads, traveling in teams of up to 30 men.
- d. Horses and mules (seldom reported) with loads of 150 to 330 pounds.
- e. Elephants with loads of 800 pounds.
- f. Bull carts with 1,500 pounds.
- g. Sampans with up to 1,500 pounds.
- h. Motor carts (3-wheel) with 500 pounds.
- i. Junks and oceangoing ships.

## ANNEX D

## ORGANIZATION OF THE INTERNAL VIET CONG LOGISTICS NETWORK



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